



# FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY

WANT TO REALLY GET AWAY? INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED YACHT DESIGNER WARD SETZER, A PREEMINENT YACHTING EXPERT, GIVES A FEW POINTERS ON THIS INCREASINGLY POPULAR LIFESTYLE

*By Charles Upchurch*



...put his technical skill to good use and to the 152-foot Lia Fail, launched in March.



When he's not designing superyachts, Setzer enjoys sailing, power cruising and surfing around the world with wife Marcie and their two teenage sons.

**E**ver wish you could get a few nautical miles away from, well, everything? During the off-season, when downtime is crucial, sailing off into the sunset may be the ideal way to rehabilitate minds, bodies and souls. Yet no matter how fat your wallet, you can't take your dream house with you around the world. You can't cruise through the ports of the French Riviera in your jet. It's hard to detach your VIP suite from the hotel and wake up in a new town.

The freedom yachting represents explains why more professional athletes are embracing this exhilarating lifestyle. Just look at Tiger Woods: He named his yacht *Privacy*, and if you've ever spent any time with him, you'll understand why. But contrary to popular belief, you don't have to have Tiger's bankroll to enjoy the luxuries and pleasures available on the world's finest motoryachts. You do, however, need expert guidance to successfully navigate the waters of yacht ownership and chartering.

"Whether you are interested in buying a yacht or chartering, you need to do your homework and find a professional you trust," explains Ward Setzer, a preeminent expert on the yachting lifestyle. "How much you should plan to spend is really a question for a financial adviser, but if you do your research and you buy a vessel to charter out when you're not using it, the investment can pay for itself better than vacation homes."

Setzer should know. He's an internationally acclaimed yacht designer whose vessels have claimed three of the 12 International Superyacht Society Design Awards given out in the last four years. His 80-foot express cruiser *Wombat* graced the April



"Flawless" was how *Yachting* magazine described this Setzer classic—the 84-foot express cruiser *Wombat*.

2005 cover of *Yachting* magazine, and in the May issue of *Yachts International*, editor Jamie Welch wrote that Setzer's "critical eye for form and function has propelled him into the ranks of the world's most sought-after yacht designers."

It's a busy job these days, as approximately 6,000 yachts are under active commission around the world—a number that has doubled in the last 10 years, according to *Power & Motoryacht* magazine. Roughly 100 new yachts will be launched this year, ranging in price from around \$5 million for an 80-foot vessel to an average of \$20 million for a 150-foot superyacht. The average cost of the vessels on *Forbes.com*'s recent list of the 10 most expensive yachts in the world was \$64.37 million (noticeably absent from the list were two of the world's largest yachts, 400-plus-foot behemoths owned by software moguls

Larry Ellison and Paul Allen). Owners spend at least an additional 10 percent of the purchase price in annual maintenance and operating costs, plus captain, crew, fuel and supply expenses.

Setzer notes that the rising popularity of yachts (pleasure crafts measuring at least 80 feet) and superyachts (100-footers and above) has much to do with advances in design and technology that have elevated onboard travel and living to a new level of comfort. Those living aboard a modern motoryacht—whether they're an owner, guest or charter passenger—will find every luxury, accommodation and communications technology the finest home or resort has to offer. Daily business affairs can be conducted, whether by conference call, video teleconference, high-speed wireless Internet links or any necessary trips to shore by onboard motor launch or helicopter.

#### SUPERYACHT ARCHITECT

Setzer's voyage into the world of yacht design began with a simple love of the sea combined with a passion and talent for visual art. A native of Virginia, he graduated from North Carolina State University as an architect and trained in naval architecture at the Maine Maritime Academy. Early in his career he worked under the tutelage of Jack Hargrave, the original designer for world-renowned Hatteras Yachts, and became a top designer at Hatteras before founding his own company in 1990.

Based in Cary, N.C., the Setzer Design Group works with discerning clients and leading shipyards in the U.S. and around the world. The firm conceptualizes, designs and supervises the production of yachts and superyachts in many styles, including modern, classic, expedition and blue-water types.

**Ward Setzer's Top Five Yachting Destinations**

Bora Bora and Fiji

Galapagos Islands

Bay of Islands, New Zealand



safe and seaworthy as well—the old naval term is ‘duty of care,’ and we take that as seriously as we do the art of comfort and luxury.”

#### OWNING AND CHARTERING

So what makes a good boat, and how do you determine what kind of yacht is best for you? As in all design, according to Setzer, it’s in the bones. Below any beautiful skin there must be a well-designed seagoing hull form. There must be advanced engineering, electronics, systems and safety features. Add to that a proper balance of exterior and interior details that are both practical and distinctive.

“A great boat to one person may not be so to another, so the purpose and intended use is key,” says Setzer. “The environment of one of our vessels in Fiji is totally different than that of one based in South Florida, just as a boat based in the Mediterranean is specifically designed for that location.”

One example from Setzer’s portfolio of custom superyachts is a recent design commissioned by an owner who wanted a vessel to take him, his family and friends to the world’s best surfing locations. Setzer, an avid surfer himself, designed the 150-foot yacht to nimbly navigate challenging coastal reefs and underwater hazards, and included enough onboard jet skis and motor launches to reach the breaks. A special room was also designed to accommodate the surfers’ boards, wet suits and other gear.

Owning a yacht of any size is a commitment only to be undertaken with the most trusted professional guidance. That guidance can come from a designer such as Setzer, a shipyard, a boat captain, a yacht broker or another owner. Be advised that signing with a yacht broker to represent you in the process of buying a boat is similar to signing with an agent to represent you to corporate interests. If you sign with a broker, the broker is entitled to a commission on the sale whether he had anything to do with the sale or not. Thus, there are brokers who will hard-sell you to sign with them once they know you are in the market.

Likewise, Setzer insists, do your research if you are considering a yacht charter. Safety, comfort and service while on the water are essential in order for you and your friends, family or business associates to enjoy the yachting lifestyle to its fullest.

*For more information on Ward Setzer and Setzer Design Group, visit [www.setzerdesign.com](http://www.setzerdesign.com).*

## BEFORE YOU BUY OR CHARTER

### TAKE NOTE

1. Charter before you buy to learn what you like and dislike.
2. Hire an unbiased professional to guide you through the ropes.
3. Realistically examine how you are going to use the vessel.
4. If you’re buying, consider whether the vessel will always be private or if it will go into charter service when you are not using it. Not all yachts are successful charter vessels.
5. Have a professional survey performed.
6. Know what is under the hood; your life may someday depend on it.
7. Don’t take on a vessel that is more than 10 years old without very good guidance.
8. Make out an operating budget and understand all the costs, from crew to dockage to maintenance.



### YACHT ETIQUETTE 101

1. Remove your shoes when you leave the dock and carry them on board. Plan on going barefoot until told otherwise, and then wear only non-marking boat shoes.
2. Do not massage that glistening teak or stainless steel. Fingerprints are a crew’s nightmare.
3. Never attempt a *Titanic*-like move by standing up on the bow.
4. Do not bring hard suitcases on board, as they are hard to store and can damage expensive cabinetry and fabrics.
5. Do not go into the crew quarters unless invited.
6. Get a lesson in marine toilets; they can be temperamental.
7. Realize that vessels have limited fresh-water supplies; there is often a short shower rule to observe as a courtesy.
8. Help out with dock lines when you know what you are doing and those in charge say it’s OK.
9. Do not throw anything overboard.
10. When you get back to shore, leave the boat lingo behind.